

well if he has closely examined some half-dozen specimens, presenting the different appearances depending upon age, sex, or the like, of one species. He will now find, from an inspection of Professor Baird's labours, that an acquaintance with a much larger number of individuals, especially from different localities, is requisite if he intends to advance his science. One result of this attention to increased material, if generally followed, we suspect will be the very desirable one of nullifying the species-makers—species-makers, of course we mean, in a bad sense, for there are no more useful men, if they will but keep their hobbies under command.

To criticize this work as it should be done, we frankly avow, is quite beyond our power now. We trust, either as it proceeds (and it has now attained a goodly bulk) or when it is concluded, to induce some of our contributors, whose personal acquaintance with Neogean forms is perhaps only inferior to Professor Baird's, to offer our readers such a commentary upon it as will be worthy of their attention. We will now only stay to remark that the author, with the aid of Dr. W. Stimpson, has been subjecting the tongues of several species of different families, and especially of *Cerebidae*, *Mniotiltidae*, and *Vireonidae*, to a microscopical examination, the chief result of which is that *Dendræca tigrina* is now removed into a genus by itself, under the name *Perissoglossa*, its lingual structure being so fundamentally different from that of other members of the family as almost to warrant its entire removal from the *Mniotiltidae*. Professor Baird introduces (p. 163) woodcut representations of this organ in birds belonging to nine different genera, and a comparison of the diagrams shows there is no *lapsus lingue* in speaking of *Perissoglossa tigrina* as having the tongue *par excellence* among its allies.

XXXI.—*Letters, Extracts from Correspondence, Notices, &c.*

THE following letters have been received, addressed "To the Editor of the 'Ibis':—

Takow, Formosa, 27 Feb., 1863.

SIR,— . . . Ducks and Teal were abundant in our lagoon throughout December and January, and the market was well

supplied with them, but the return of warm weather has made the wild fowl scarce. Teal are caught here in nets. Special spots are cleared among the reeds, and the quiet open water exposed in small patches, to which the Teal resort to feed at night. As they fly low to these places, the fowlers suspend loose nets from the tops of bamboo-poles, and at dusk the flocks dash against them, bringing them down and being involved in the meshes. They are thus bagged and brought alive to market. We do not appear to be visited by Geese, Swans, or Pelicans, though during winter most of the other aquatic birds of the Chinese coast occur. In addition to those already noted among the Sandpipers, I may name the Redshank (*Totanus calidris*). Snipe are in great abundance, *Scolopax gallinago* being far more abundant than *S. stenura*; and *Rhynchæa sinensis* is also pretty numerous.

The other day half-way up Apes' Hill, on a white patch caused by a heavy land-slip, I observed what I took to be a black tree-stump; but a shining white spot on it excited my wonderment. As we ascended the mass of coralliferous debris, the stump-like object took wing and slowly flapped away amid the hoots and grunts of several monkeys that were sporting on the hill-side. I then saw that it was an adult Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), the white spot being one of the conspicuous shoulder-patches this bird carries in the mature plumage. I fancied afterwards that I saw another of the same species in company with it. A large Eagle-like bird has since been observed by a friend of mine here. From his description I took it to be *Haliaetus albicilla*; but it may have been *Spizaetus orientalis*, procured before at Tamsuy. *Pandion haliaetus* is not rare here, and *Circus spilonotus* (both males and females) pretty common, as also at Amoy at this season. The Kestrel [*Tinnunculus japonicus*?] is also common, but I have not succeeded in getting a specimen as yet. The Peregrine Falcon I have observed, and, I think, the Hobby, Merlin, and Sparrow-Hawk, but of these last I cannot be certain. I saw a Buzzard-like bird yesterday wheeling in circles high overhead. The two central feathers of its tail were elongated. I cannot form any speculation as to what it was, for it may have been one of the species with which

I am not acquainted. Kites (*Milvus melanotis*) are of course numerous, and are just now laying their eggs. An Owl, flushed by me on the top of Apes' Hill the other day, puzzled me. In habit it was like *Asio brachyotus*, but apparently a good deal larger. The only Owl I have yet obtained here was a rufescent specimen of the pretty little *Scops japonicus*, preserved alive in December. The fine sunny climate during winter at Takow draws close on that at Amoy; but it is warmer here, and, at any rate, vastly different from the humid Tamsuy climate. Swallows and Drongos, as I mentioned before, may be found here all the year round. By the way, I saw one of the latter (*Dicrurus macrocercus*) with a small bird in his claws. The quarry appeared to be *Drymæca extensicauda*, mihi. Before proceeding further I will give you my note on the small Owl which died 21st December:

Scops japonicus. Rufescent. Iris fine clear yellow. Bill greyish-brown; lower mandible ochreous. Feet bluish-grey, tinged with brown. Claws light brown at base. Entire length about 7 inches. Wing 6 inches. Tail (of twelve feathers) rounded, 2.9 inches.

I communicated before (Ibis, 1863, p. 380) the fact of *Munia acuticauda* having been domesticated in Japan to the extent of every shade of albinism and melanism, but I have not yet discovered whether the bird is found wild in those islands. I have since seen domesticated Java Sparrows (*Oryzornis oryzivora*), also from Japan. These birds can scarcely be indigenous to Japan, and must have been taken there by the Dutch from Java. In the domesticated race every variety of albinism occurred, but I saw no signs of a melanite tendency. The domestication may have only been partial. They breed freely in confinement, as do the *Muniæ*.

Consul Caine, at Swatow, as I told you, sent me a specimen of a *Merops* which I identified as *M. philippensis* (*suprà*, p. 230). He has since informed me that it was shot there in August (and not, as I before said, "in the beginning of winter"), when in company with some others of its species. They kept perching on the tops of bamboo-poles, and sailing into the air after insects. Among the birds sent me by Mr. Caine are some that are well worth noting:—

Vanellus cristatus in winter plumage, shot at Swatow in November 1864. The most southerly locality for this bird on the China coast.

Fulica atra, the same season, also the most southern occurrence that has come to my knowledge.

Circus aeruginosus (Marsh-Harrier). The first occurrence of this species noted in China, and at a low point on the coast; but, curiously enough, it has also lately turned up at Amoy, of which more anon. Captain Blakiston procured this bird in Japan.

I had occasion to visit Hong-Kong last month. I spent the 14th and 15th of January there, and of course visited the bird-shops. The lively half-Tit half-Robin, *Liothrix lutea*, was caged in abundance. Perched on a bamboo, to which he was tied, was a *Urocissa sinensis*, wild but bold and pugnacious, ruffling his feathers and attacking the hand I put forward. In style and manner he much resembled our Formosan friend, *U. cerulea*. The irides, however, were of a *deep burnt-sienna, tinged with crimson*. I have found the crimson eye to prevail in all the specimens I have hitherto shot at Foochow, and, from this specimen, such would appear to be the colour of that feature in the Hong-Kong bird. Whence then the live specimen in the Zoological Gardens at home, with the light yellow iris? Is it truly from China? If so, from what part? May there not be two species on the China coast? I recollect, while in England, asserting that the irides of the Chinese *Urocissa* were red, but my statement was so much ridiculed that I began to disbelieve it myself, fancying I might have been mistaken; but a sight of the Hong-Kong live bird recalled the whole truth to mind. I see Dr. Jerdon (Birds of India, ii. p. 310) gives the irides of his Indian *U. sinensis* as "fine red."

In a small cage in one shop, I saw a pair of small Finches of a blue and olive plumage, with black Sparrow-like bills. They were said to be from the interior of South China, but I can find nothing like them in Dr. Jerdon's pages. They were not in good condition, and had no tails; so I did not purchase them. What could they have been?

I saw several live Pheasants (*Phasianus torquatus*), for which large prices were asked. Among them was one curious variety, looking uncommonly like what I recollect of a *P. mongolicus* I

saw in Mr. Gould's possession, but on its back and flanks were scattered feathers of the ordinary character. It was in bad health, the cheek-skin being quite sallow and sickly-looking.

GARRULAX AURITUS (Daudin), Blyth, 'Catalogue,' p. 95, I purchased alive, and sent to Dr. Squire for the Society's Gardens. It seems to range from the extreme south of China to the Tenasserim Provinces, whence Mr. Blyth procured it. I have never met with it wild. It is a fine species, in size rather larger than *G. perspicillatus*. Bill black; legs and claws brown; irides crimson. Forehead and a short crest at the base of the culmen black, a streak of which colour also encircles the eye, and a patch of the same occurs on the throat and under the neck. Just in rear of the frontal crest are a few pointed white feathers, and there is an oval white patch on each cheek. The general plumage is cinereous. Back, wings, and tail, olive-brown, darker on two last, with deep-coloured shafts. Quills edged with cinereous. Blue-grey on head. Ordinary call like a *corvine* croak. Loud note like "hurrah," often repeated. It also emitted a low whistle. It was very lively and noisy.

CERIORNIS CABOTI, Gould, P. Z. S. 1857, p. 161. I was fortunate enough to pick up what I took to be a live specimen of this extremely rare species*. It has also gone forward to Dr. Squire at Calcutta. It was apparently a young bird, with a little knob at the base of the bill, and wart-like spurs on the tarsi. Bill horn-coloured, orange at the base of the gonys. Legs light flesh-brown. Eye-streak and edge of crest fiery. Plumage brown (Hen-like), mottled with black, and spotted with fiery, studded all over with light dingy-ochreous ocelli. Tail short, blackish-brown, with pale brownish mottlings. Head variegated with black and sienna-red, more or less bright. Skin round the eyes and cere pink, the latter pretty thickly clothed with feathers. Arrow-shaped white spots on the under parts. Size that of a large female *Gallus domesticus*.

A pair of small Quail drew my attention. They had been received by the bird-seller from Canton. A day or two after,

* It has hitherto been known only from the type-specimen in Dr. Cabot's collection at Boston, which was said to have been obtained at Macao (*vide* Sclater, P. Z. S. 1863, p. 123).—ED.

when passing through Swatow, Mr. Caine showed me the skin of one of the same species, and said that, among the large number of Quail seen by him this winter (for they have been unusually abundant this year), he had only observed one pair of these, which he procured by a right-and-left shot. They looked as large as Common Quail (*Coturnix communis*) when on the wing, and had a very similar flight. In the striation of the breast and the bright yellow legs they were very like a *Turnix*, but they were nevertheless true Quails. The only described bird this species might be is *Coturnix coromandelica* (Gmelin), *C. textilis*, Temminck. I can, however, neither reconcile the figure nor the description of that in the 'Cabinet of Natural History' with our species; I shall therefore bring it forward provisionally as

COTURNIX CAINEANA, sp. nov.

C. fere turniciformis, supra saturation, facie gulaque rubris, pectore cum lateribus fulvis transversim nigro-striatis, ventre albido, axillariis niveis, remigibus fuscis ochreo-marginatis, rostro nigro, pedibus aurantiacis.

Upper plumage Quail-like, but of a deeper brown, the median stripes on the rump being broad. Quills light hair-brown, narrowly edged with ochreous. Face and throat brick-dust red. Breast and flanks light buff, with transverse blackish-brown bars. Vent deeper coloured; belly dingy white; axillaries pure white. Bill blackish brown, with pale tip and tomia. Inside of mouth ochreous. Legs orange-yellow, with a little brown on the claws. Iris hazel.

Length 5·25 inches; wing 2·9 inches; tail soft, and scarcely distinguishable. Tarsi 0·85 inch, middle toe and claw 0·75 inch. Outer claw rather longer than the inner.

This description is taken from a fresh Hong Kong female specimen. The surviving Hong Kong male bird and the Swatow skin are each rather larger, with a longer and stronger bill and rather stouter legs. The last specimen has the wing 3 inches long, the transverse bars on the lower parts broader, and the throat whiter. It is in other respects similar to the Hong Kong female.

The ordinary note of my caged male is of a soft coaxing tone; but at daylight every morning, and at irregular intervals during cloudy weather, it bursts out with a loud song—*He-pe-péw*, which it repeats several times. In appearance it looks like a cross between the Quail and a *Turnix*; but its sternum is altogether that of a *Coturnix*.

At Amoy I saw a stuffed specimen of what I believe to be the true *Pelicanus onocrotalus*. It was much larger than the common *P. crispus**, and the elongated occipital feathers turned downwards, instead of curling upwards. The specimen was nearly mature, but without the fully developed crest of the nuptial season. It had been shot, a few weeks before, on the river near Amoy. Up the same river, on the 28th of January, a friend shot and gave me a fine specimen of the Marsh-Harrier. As this was the first instance of its occurrence in Amoy, I took pains to note down its appearance while in the flesh, and I here transcribe my note.

Circus aeruginosus. Length 23·5 inches; wing 7·25 inches; tail 10·25 inches. Tarsi about 4 inches, feathered for more than an inch in front. Middle toe 2 inches; its claw 1 inch. Legs light clear yellow, with black claws. Apical half of bill blackish brown, basal part bluish-grey washed with yellow, more deeply on the culmen. Cere dotted with long vibrissæ, curved backward. Iris deep chocolate. Inside of mouth light greyish-indigo. General plumage chocolate-brown, with basal portions of the feathers white. Throat and sides of the cheeks, under the eyes, white. Head the same, washed with buff, and blotched and streaked. Scapulars with more or less white and reddish-buff. Inner web of outer quills margined on basal half with white, freckled with buff, and becoming browner on those approaching the humeral quills. The concealed white on the basal portion of many of the body-feathers washed with light chestnut. Extreme base of tail and quills, like that of most of the other feathers, pure white. The bird was infested with lice.

The Swatow specimen, before referred to, is paler, and has more white and chestnut about it.

At a Meeting of the Zoological Society, I was asked to give

* *Vide antea*, p. 111, note.—ED.

some account of the Red-legged Partridge of Tientsin. I had not then seen the bird. I have lately had the pleasure of observing a pair in a gentleman's aviary at Amoy, and I send you a slight sketch of them. They were brought down from Chefoo. They are certainly very like the Chukar (*Caccabis chukar*), but I have no proper description of that bird to which I can refer. I have asked my friend to get me some specimens, dead or alive, from Chefoo, and these I may be able to send home for identification. Meanwhile this note must serve.

Male rather larger than the female, and with a small blunt spur. In bulk about the size of a French Partridge (*Caccabis rufa*). Iris deep hazel. Legs and bill pink-red. A black line runs over the forehead, through the eye, round the ear-coverts, and, descending, unites with the corresponding one from the other side in a deep irregular point on the breast. In this black line, just behind the ear, there occurs a light chestnut spot. Prevailing plumage cinereous, purer on the head, rump, and tail, washed elsewhere with light chestnut. Supercilium, starting from just above the eye, white. Quills margined and greater wing-coverts tipped with the same. Flanks transversely banded with black, rich chestnut, and white. Rest of lower parts white, tinged with grey and light chestnut-buff. Sexes similar. Plumage compact and smooth.

This may be the bird which Temminck has noted from Japan as *Perdix rubra*. I can hardly believe it is the true Chukar, and should think it extremely likely it will turn out new.

On the 8th of December, I procured a fine male of *Euplocomus swinhoii* in beautiful plumage. It was brought to me from a distant station in the interior of this island, and I forwarded it to Hong Kong, whence it was shipped to Dr. Squire, at Calcutta, for the London Gardens. I trust it may arrive all safe. This bird is rare, and extremely difficult to procure, as the mountain travelling here is far from safe. My chief bird-hunter was nearly murdered and robbed of fifty pounds, the other day, while in search of Deer and this Pheasant. The mishap has quite crippled me for the present; but I am engaging another man, and hope to get additional specimens of

this beautiful creature, as well as of some other of the choice novelties from this island, for transmission to England.

I have at last received the Sixteenth Part of Mr. Gould's 'Birds of Asia,' containing the Formosan series. I regret to see that in the fine plates no attention has been paid to the style of the scenery, a very correct idea of which might have been obtained from my figures of the aborigines, which were executed by an artist who had himself been here, and who inserted the landscapes from his own sketch-book. The grand mistake is the introduction in two of the plates of the cocoa-nut palm, which I had taken particular pains to explain was not indigenous to this country. About thirty miles off, we have lately discovered one solitary tree of this species; but it is the only known instance of its existence in the island, and was probably planted. The only palliation I can think of is the plea offered by the editor of a well-known illustrated newspaper in a similar case. A view taken at Peshawur, in the North-West Provinces of India, was sent him by an amateur artist for insertion. When it appeared in print, the landscape was found ornamented with a conspicuous cocoa-nut tree, not one of which grows in that region. The artist wrote to remonstrate with the Editor for not adhering faithfully to his original. The Editor replied that "the British public demanded a cocoa-nut!"

I am, &c.,

ROBERT SWINHOE.

Takow, Formosa, 1 April, 1865.

SIR,— I ought to have to say something of the Swatow birds; for Consul Caine, at that port, still exerts himself in our cause; but, unfortunately, his parcel has this time miscarried. I must in consequence confine myself to Formosa. The last part of March has been unusually cool, with strong northerly winds, squalls, and cloudy weather. On the 22nd we were out for a long walk round Whaleback, an island-like hill in the broad alluvial plain between the high Apes' Hill and the inner mountain-range. This hill looks like a thick stratum of earth well

tilted to the westward, about 600 feet high, the tilted side being abrupt and precipitous, and the back portion gently declining to the plain. The rock, in its formation, is of calcareous conglomerate, similar to that of Apes' Hill, and interlarded and stratified in like manner with clay. Its rocky front is studded with bushes and coarse vegetation, its back clothed with smooth grass. Round about are fields of young paddy, sugar-canes cut or ready for cutting, and fallows in process of preparation for further crops. Between it and Apes' Hill lies the old decayed walled town of Kooseah, with its poor straggling population and its curious central One-tree Hill (a good landmark), and several thriving sheltered villages with hedge-rows, formed chiefly of the screw-pine (*Pandanus*, sp.). To the right of Kooseah, and close to Whaleback, the easternmost of the creeks from our harbour terminates the lagoon in a marshy swamp. Such is a slight sketch of the country passed. From the young paddy we got *Rallus striatus*, and saw flocks of *Buphus coromandelianus* and *Herodias garzetta*, with occasional examples of *Ardetta cinnamomea*, *Butorides javanica*, and a few of *Egretta alba* with their bills still yellow. From the swamps we had *Gallinago scolopacina*, *Rhynchæa chinensis*, *Gallinula chloropus*, *G. phænicura*, *Podiceps minor*, and *Gallinago stenura*. These last were common on grass-patches, nearly dry, where we also killed a *Gallinago solitaria*—an unusually early bird. In the fields under the harrow both *G. scolopacina* and *G. stenura* were common enough, often in "wisps," together with large flocks of *Charadrius longipes*. The ground here was quite dry. In the fields and hedge-rows we noticed *Turtur chinensis*, *T. humilis*, *Centropus affinis*, *Lanius shah*, *Oriolus chinensis*, *Myiagra azurea*, *Acridotheres cristatellus*, and *Pica media*. Of birds of prey we saw several—*Milvus melanotis*, *Tinnunculus*, sp.?, *Circus spilonotus*, *C. æruginosus* (it looked very like this species, but we did not procure it), *Accipiter nisus*, *A. gularis*, *Falco peregrinus*, and *F. subbuteo*. We saw also a small Hawk with a thick-set body, which I could not make out. At the foot of Whaleback we saw one Pheasant and one Button-Quail (*Turnix*, sp.), being all the true game we encountered in our long ramble. Large flocks of *Cypselus affinis* and *C. vittatus* darted over our heads for the

greater part of the day. In a tree, some twenty feet from the ground, I found a nest of *Lanius shah*, the female sitting on five eggs.

On the 26th of March my hunter returned from the hills. He had penetrated no great distance, as his collection, consisting chiefly of birds of the plain, and containing no *Accipitres*, plainly showed. He brought, however, an extremely interesting species from the lower range. This was a *Munia*, of which there were several specimens both in young and old plumage, dead and alive. It is a new species, closely allied to *M. rubronigra* of Hodgson, but singularly differing from it in the occiput and nape being brown instead of a rich black, as are the other dark parts. This bird supplies another curious confirmation of what I have before stated as to the affinities of the fauna of this island with that of the Himalaya, rather than with that of China. It has the black ventral stripe of *M. rubronigra*, which is wanting in *M. sinensis*. I propose to call it

MUNIA FORMOSANA, sp. nov.

Similis *M. rubronigra*, sed occipite nuchaque fuscis nec nigris.

Hab. In Formosa meridionali, ad montium pedes.

Adult. Above, sides of the breast and flanks chestnut. Forehead, face, and under-parts deep black, the former fading into brown on the occiput and nape. Lower rump deep glossy maroon. Upper tail-coverts and two central tail-feathers flameous. Remaining tail-feathers light hair-brown, washed and edged with chestnut. Axillaries and basal edge of under-quills pale buff, the under-stems white. Edge of carpus beneath chestnut, marked with black. The chestnut on the breast forms a narrow belt. Bill cobalt-blue, deeper on the culmen and gonys. Irides deep rich brown. Legs and claws plumbeous, with light yellowish soles and bases. Length 4.25 inches; wing 2.12 inches; tail 1.5 inch.

Immature. Above light yellowish-brown, washed with chestnut on every part except the head. Under parts pale dingy buff. Some of the specimens are entirely in the young plumage, others show every step to maturity. The moult is probably completed

before the bird begins to breed, and those in the youngest garb are doubtless the produce of late nests last year.

Amongst the ordinary birds brought, two specimens of *Lanius shah* had the frontal black mark reaching to beyond the centre of the crown, and an example of *Garrulax taivanus* had the tip of its upper mandible protracted about .25 inch more than usual.

On the 30th of March, H. M. gunboat 'Flamer' returned to harbour, from a cruise after pirates, to Lung-kiaou Bay, forty miles south of this place. My interpreter, who accompanied this expedition, brought me a live Ground-Pigeon, of the genus *Chalcophaps*. This bird answers to the description of *C. indica* of India, rather than to that of *C. javanica* of the Archipelago (Bp. Consp. Av. ii. p. 91). The notable difference in our bird is in the colour of its under tail-coverts, which are black, while in the Indian they are greyish-brown varied with chestnut. I designate it as

CHALCOPHAPS FORMOSANA, sp. nov.

Similis *C. indicæ*, sed subcaudalibus nigris nec fusco-cinereo castaneoque variis.

Hab. In Formosa meridionali (Lung-kiaou).

Mantle beautiful bronze-green; basal and hidden parts of feathers, together with the quills, black. Outer shoulder vinaceous-brown, margined with grey, and tipped with white. Cheeks, sides of the neck, and breast fine vinaceous, becoming paler and tinged with grey on the under-parts. Crown of the head, streak down the occiput, and dorsal edge of the vinaceous bluish-grey, cinereous on the front and sides of the crown. The bluish-grey band unites one shoulder with the other. Forehead and thin streak over the eye white; chin very pale. Back greyish-black with two bands of pearly-grey, the lower one deepening into the blackish-grey rump. Tail-coverts broadly tipped with black. Tail purplish-black, the outer feathers on each side being marked with grey, somewhat on the inner web, and on the outer web for the greater part of its length. All the rectrices, except the central pair, with more or less bluish-grey. Under tail-coverts nearly the length of the tail, the shorter ones being blackish-

grey, the longer purplish-black. Vent deep grey, with a vinaceous tinge. Axillaries bright cinnamon. Flank-feathers with white shafts, enormously thick and pointed. Bill with the basal third dull madder, the rest to tip light bright coral-red. Iris deep rich madder-brown. Rim round the eye and eyelid madder—nearly the colour of the base of the bill; legs almost the same, but rather redder, with pale, somewhat horn-coloured under-edges, soles, and claws, scutellations pale and distinctly marked. Tarsal joint bare. Length 9·5 inches. Bill from forehead ·62 inch, from gape ·87 inch. Wing imperfect, and therefore not measured. Tail 3·62 inches, and wedge-shaped. Tarsus 1·1 inch; middle-toe and claw 1·1 inch. The specimen, a male, with well-developed testes.

A few small parties of *Heterornis sinensis* have been about for the last day or two, probably driven by the late gales from their usual route of migration up the mainland of China. They do not appear to summer in Formosa. A few couple of *Lobipes hyperboreus* have also been seen. The first pair I watched from the point looking to seaward, just outside the mouth of the harbour. They were floating close together in a chopping sea, and breasted the breaking ripple with great ease and unconcern. I sent a boat and some men after them, but she was so unsteady that the first four shots missed. The birds did not get frightened at the report, but swam nearer to each other, when the fifth barrel put an end to their existence. The next day (30th March) I saw a pair busily engaged in feeding inside the harbour, on some straw and filth thrown from a junk. These were just as fearless, and we easily procured them. One had the maggot of a blow-fly sticking in his throat. All four birds were in winter-plumage, with just a sign here and there of the coming nuptial tints.

My list of rarities for the month of March closes with an

ARDEA GOISAGI, Temminck.

I procured it from a fisherman, who had caught it on the sands close to this port. This is the first instance of its occurrence here, and at Tamsuy I only procured it once. If indigenous to the island, it would appear to be extremely rare.

Blyth identifies *A. melanocephala**, with this bird. I subjoin a short note on the specimen procured, *Ardea* (*Gorsachius*) *goisagi*:—Crown and occiput without crest, each feather marked along the middle with black. Only the first quill-feather tipped with white. Iris dark straw-colour. Bill bluish-black, base of its lower mandible light greenish horn-colour. Cere and naked skin of the face greenish-yellow, inclining to black on the eyelid. Legs olive-yellow, soles dingy; claws brown, the middle one pectinated with broad teeth. Length about 19 inches; wing 10·75 inches. Bill from forehead 1·62 inch, from gape 2·37 inches. Tail, of twelve feathers, somewhat wedge-shaped, 4·5 inches. Tarsus 2·7 inches. Middle toe and claw 2·25 inches. Outer toe rather longer than the inner. Large testes on dissection. The whole plumage of the bird about three parts advanced to maturity.

I am, &c.,

ROBERT SWINHOE.

SIR,—I have a few remarks to offer upon Lord Lilford's interesting "Notes on the Ornithology of Spain," contained in your last Number.

Reference is there made (p. 172) to two specimens of *Aquila navioides* received by Mr. Gurney from Spain, and placed in the Norwich Museum. As I believe them to be the only authenticated European examples of this bird existing in this country, it is perhaps advisable that some further information should be given of the manner in which they were obtained. In the course of a hasty journey through Spain in 1861, of which I have given an account in the second series of Mr. Galton's 'Vacation Tourists,' I made the acquaintance of Dr. Reinhold Brehm, who was then resident at Madrid, and had the pleasure of inspecting a fine series of rapacious birds obtained by him in the vicinity of the capital. Among them were skins of a supposed new species, which he had named *Aquila adalberti*†. Two of these were

* Apparently a *lapsus calami* for *A. melanolophus*. But see Mr. Blyth's remarks in our Number for January (p. 38).—ED.

† They are described under this name by Dr. Ludwig Brehm in an

subsequently acquired by Mr. Gurney, with whom I put Dr. R. Brehm in communication, and are the specimens now in the Norwich Museum. I believe this to be the first, if not the only, authenticated instance of the occurrence of *Aquila naevioides* in Europe.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

P. L. SCLATER.

SIR,—As you express a doubt, in your editorial note to Mr. A. G. More's paper on the "Distribution of Birds" (*Ibis*, 1865, p. 9), whether the Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) has bred in Scotland for more than ten years, I am happy to be able to inform you that this interesting species still breeds regularly every season at a locality in Inverness-shire, which, for prudence sake, I forbear to name.

Lord Hill informs me that he has had the young birds sent to him from that quarter for several years, but that finding it is quite impossible to rear them, he has for the last season or two requested that they might be left undisturbed.

I remain, &c.,

JOHN ROCKE.

Clungunford House, Shropshire,
June 10th, 1855.

Priory Hill, St. Neot's, Huntingdonshire,
June 21st, 1865.

SIR,—I have this season received, or myself taken, many Cuckoo's eggs, the particulars of which confirm the remarks I made in the last Number of the '*Ibis*.' One, I think, deserves notice. The nest of a Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla yarrelli*) was placed on a pollard-willow over the Ouse; and when looked into at a quarter before six o'clock on the morning of May 1st, it contained two Wagtail's eggs. By a quarter before six o'clock the same evening a Cuckoo's egg had been added. This was taken out by the finder, and the next morning early the Wagtail laid a third egg, after which the nest was brought to me.

article upon Eagles, in the '*Bericht über die XIII. Versammlung der Deutschen Ornithologen-Gesellschaft zu Stuttgart*' (pp. 55-62).

This fact, taken in connexion with my observations of 1864 (recorded at page 186), gives from May 1st—instead of May 5th—to July 19th as the period during which *Cuculus canorus* lays its eggs.

I now always instruct my collectors to search in the grass or weeds under the nest for the eggs turned out by the Cuckoo, and in two instances I myself have found them uninjured. From this circumstance I am inclined to believe that the Cuckoo does not suck eggs. At all events it is clear that she does not make use of them as food. I have never, it is true, seen her in the act of turning out any; but I cannot believe that the parent-bird is the agent in this process, and am quite convinced that the Cuckoo is.

I remain, &c.,

GEO. DAWSON ROWLEY.

From information contained in a letter from Dr. Giglioli, kindly communicated to us by Dr. Selater, we understand that Dr. Salvadori, whose name is well known to the readers of 'The Ibis,' has now in preparation a general work upon the Italian avifauna, which we are sure will prove an acceptable addition to our knowledge of the birds of Italy; for we are not aware that any book on the ornithology of that peninsula as a whole has appeared since the completion, now more than twenty years since, of Prince Charles Lucien's costly, and therefore rare, 'Iconografia della Fauna Italica.' From the same source we learn that the same gentleman, who has lately been putting in order the ornithological collection of the University of Turin, has found, among other interesting specimens in it, one of *Hypsipetes niveiceps*, described by Mr. Swinhoe in 'The Ibis' for last year (p. 424). We also hear that Professor De Filippi, the energetic director of the same museum, has lately acquired two splendid examples of another of Mr. Swinhoe's discoveries—*Crossoptilum mantchuricum*, which were sent over by a missionary from the neighbourhood of Pekin.

Pastor Theobald writes to us from Copenhagen that he and his friends have again this year succeeded in obtaining eggs of *Nucifraga caryocatactes* from the island of Bornholm. Two

nests were found, containing respectively three and four eggs, which are exactly like the ones first procured thence, which we mentioned in our last number (p. 226). The Nutcracker mystery may therefore now be safely regarded as settled.

When, more than a year ago, we undertook to edit this Journal, it was pressed upon us by some of our friends, whose opinion deservedly carried very great weight, that we should in future, at the end of each volume, insert a diagnostic list of all the species which had been described as new during the preceding year. Our friends urged, and with great truth, that such an addition to the many excellent papers with which we are favoured by some of the best working ornithologists of the day, would make 'The Ibis' still more useful to all lovers and students of the science, but especially to those who are resident abroad, and cut off from other sources of information as to what was doing at home. To this application we consented, though well aware not only of the large amount of additional labour which the drawing up of such lists would inflict upon us, but also of the fact that these lists alone would give but a very imperfect notion of the progress of ornithology during the periods to which they would refer; for it has already often happened, and in the present state of our science it must continue to happen still oftener, that the most important discoveries in ornithology consist not merely in the characterizing of new, or apparently new, forms, but rather in the bringing together by identification of two or more known species which have been described by different authors at different times. The execution then of the first of these objects, however useful its results, while the second and more important one was to be left untouched, would have been very unsatisfactory to us, while the carrying out of both would have swelled this Journal to a bulk not contemplated in our arrangements, and that by the addition of matter which, to some of our readers, would certainly not have been of a very attractive nature.

It was therefore with great pleasure that a few months since we found that our good friend and contributor, Dr. Albert Günther of the British Museum, had in view a scheme for the

publication of an annual volume, which would give English zoologists the same advantages as their German brethren had long derived from the time-honoured work known as "Wiegmann's Archiv." Consequently when Dr. Günther invited us to execute that portion of the undertaking which referred to the class *Aves*, we felt we could not decline a task which we believed would be of such benefit to the numerous ornithologists of this country, as well as to those of foreign nations acquainted with the English language. It was plain that the opportunity we had long sought had now presented itself, for, in a work especially devoted to the subject, we should be able to treat the cotemporary literature of our science at a length and with an attention to detail which, as we have before said, would have been quite impossible if the summary were to be embodied in, or appended to, 'The Ibis.'

Without affectation of modesty, we may be allowed to say that our own unfitness for the task was our chief misgiving. The readers of this Journal generally were unconscious of our original intention, as stated above, and the few to whom it was known would not, we were confident, regret our co-operating in an undertaking which, if successful, cannot fail to render them some service. On this score therefore there was no need for hesitating. But the ornithological world has been long accustomed to the yearly 'Bericht' of Dr. Gustav Hartlaub, and it is a serious matter for any one else to come forward on a stage where he has been for nearly twenty years the sole actor, so that we trust our own want of experience will in this case be kindly taken into consideration by our friends. We have now to announce the immediate publication of THE RECORD OF ZOOLOGICAL LITERATURE, and to say that in that portion of it which comes from our pen we have endeavoured to do justice equally by the authors from whose labours it is compiled and the public for whose use it is intended. We are sensible of its many imperfections, but we trust that its faults are of such a nature as the kind assistance of our fellow-ornithologists will in future enable us to amend. In particular, we would earnestly request that early notice of all ornithological publications may be sent to us, while we can confidently assure our present readers that, as we

now have an additional reason for becoming intimately acquainted with the contents of every paper bearing upon ornithology, our studies on behalf of the new 'Record' must necessarily be rather beneficial to 'The Ibis' than the contrary.

It is with no common feeling of regret that we have to place on record the deaths of two men who have been so actively devoted to the pursuit of zoology as Charles Waterton and John Richardson. The first expired from the effects of an accident at his well-known seat, Walton Hall, on the 27th of May, being then in the *eighty-fourth* year of his age. It is unnecessary for us to comment on the career of Mr. Waterton. He has left us an 'Autobiography' which supplies all that could be said on the subject, and the incidents of his life have been better told by himself than they could be by another. It is only to be deplored that the bulk of his observations are rendered practically useless by his systematic disregard of any precise nomenclature—that which can alone make (as it is alone its use) such observations available to others. But we believe it is still within the power of a warm admirer of the deceased naturalist to render a very great service to his memory. If any careful ornithologist were to go over Mr. Waterton's beautifully-mounted collection of birds, with the "Wanderings" and "Essays" in hand, he might be able to refer most of the specimens to the passages which mention them, and by publishing a catalogue establish, and preserve to all time, the desirable connexion between both, which is on the point of being irrecoverably lost. Unless this is done, Mr. Waterton's works will in future serve as now to amuse the reader by the brilliancy of their language, but, except in occasional instances, they will scarcely instruct him.

Sir John Richardson died at Grasmere on the 5th of June, aged *seventy-seven*. Though less addicted to ornithology than to several other branches of science, his share in the second volume of the 'Fauna Boreali-Americana' has long been highly appreciated. His active and laborious life deserves, and will doubtless obtain, the recognition of a memoir, which can hardly fail to do justice to the heroism and talents displayed by so intrepid an explorer and practical a naturalist.